

# Report to BEC 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011

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I have visited Churches Together Groups, in Biggleswade, South Bedford, All Bedford, Woburn Sands and Thurleigh. I attended the ecumenical deans' meeting in Luton.

I have attended the monthly Hope Bedfordshire meetings and the Bedford church leaders' prayer lunches.

I have met with Roy Crowne of Hope Together, Adam May formerly of Bedford Street Angels, now of Christian Nightlife Initiatives and a number of pastors, minister and vicars

I also attended Bedford Council of Faiths. I attended the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral committee as an observer

Much of my work at the moment is being at as many meetings as possible seeing and being seen, taking ideas from one place to another. Part of my role is being the face of the wider church family, sometimes I don't have to do anything but being present appears to be appreciated. For example I attended the Covenant Service between London Road Methodist and St Michael's on 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

On 18<sup>th</sup> December we organised a Get in the picture event, this was both enjoyable and productive.

I have started filling my diary with preaching dates; I regard this as an important part of my work because it gives an audience outside of those who are already committed to Church Unity. I take the time preparing and delivering sermon from the time allocated for this role, I also claim expenses from you for travel to preaching venues; therefore any preaching fees received belong to you. When offered I ask churches to give a gift to BEC

I have spent too much time looking at the situation in Marston Morteyne I will share some thoughts later in this meeting.

I'm very encouraged by the things I hear around the county, groups are looking to work together to further the gospel, one Churches Together group are foregoing a normal Lent course and will use the time to organise evangelistic debates, Is religion a force for good or evil?

In Luton the churches are addressing the perceived problems with integration in that town. This Saturday they are holding an event with their local MPs Worlds apart...Living Together.

Other things discourage, in both Bedford and Luton there are two groups churches and church leaders and others who don't engage at all with others. Transforming Luton Prayer and Churches Together in Luton, in Bedford there is some overlap between the leaders who meet on the first Thursday of each month and Churches Together, I'm not yet sure about Luton. My thoughts are that mainstream churches can find enough common ground to work together on some issues. Part of the way that I hope this role will develop over the years is to facilitate working together.

Andrew Gale January 2011